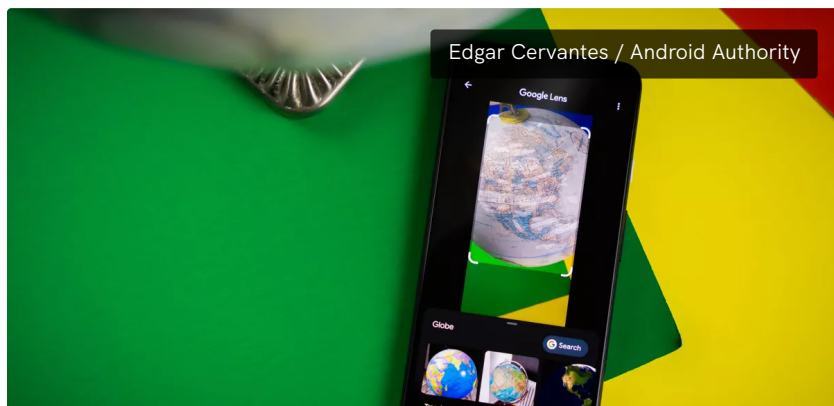
 Pixel 7: Just \$450 - Limited Time Deal!

# Google Lens guide: How to use Google's powerful visual search tool

*Google Lens is a seriously impressive tool that just about everyone will find useful in their daily lives.*

By **Bogdan Petrovan** • February 24, 2023





Google Lens is the visual search tool you never knew you needed. Think of it as Google Search, but for images. It lets you look up information on things you see, translate and copy text from pictures, get help with your schoolwork, and much more. The best thing about it? It doesn't require any typing.

Launched in 2017, Google Lens is available for Android or iOS, and it's integrated into Google Assistant, Google Photos, some camera apps, and the Chrome browser.

Google Lens taps into Google's huge trove of

Q **ANDROID AUTHORITY**



Google services, Lens is a seriously impressive tool that virtually everyone will find useful in their daily lives.

**Also read: [The ultimate guide to Gmail — Do you know about all of these features?](#)**

## Table of contents



### How does Google Lens work?

Get Google Lens on Android

Get Google Lens on iOS

How to use Lens

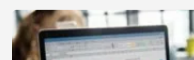
Top Google Lens features

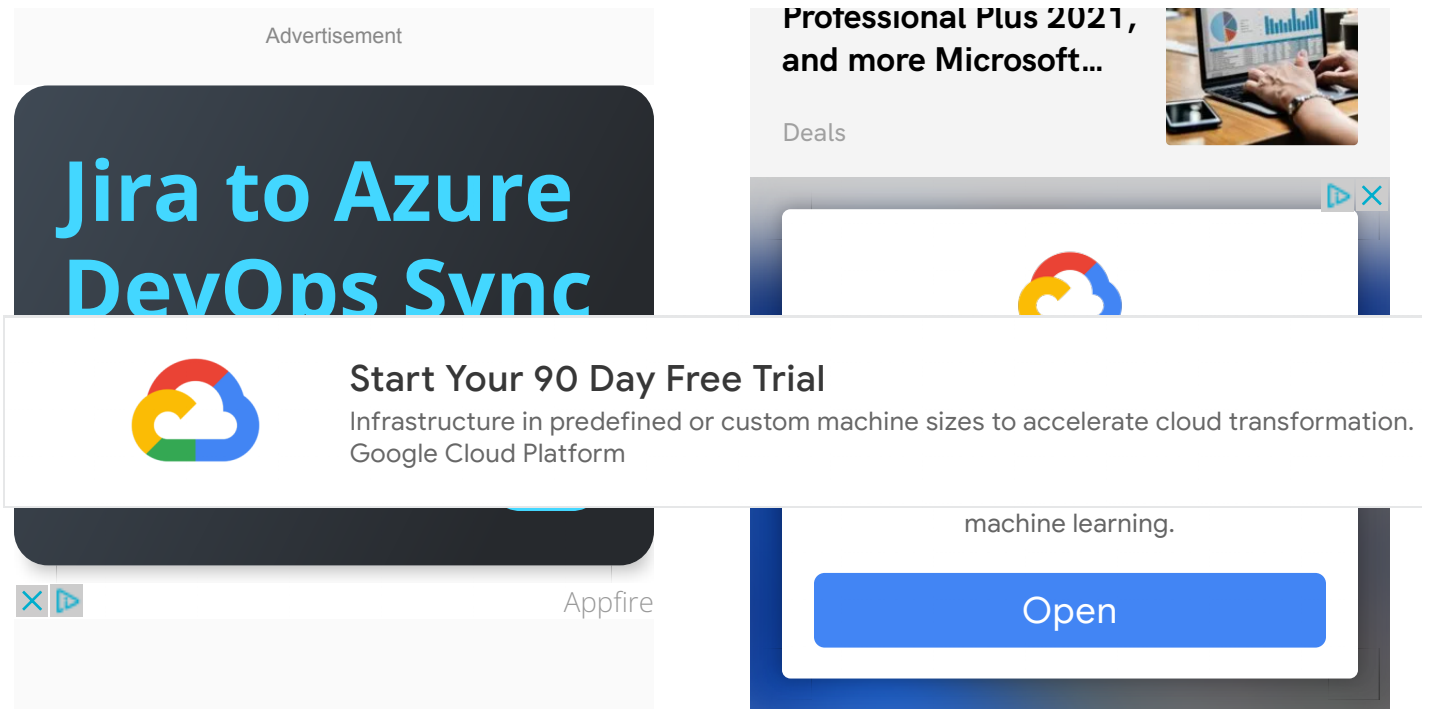
Google Lens in Chrome

Google Lens tips and tricks

FAQs

Deal: 85% off Office





## How Google Lens works

Google describes Lens as a “set of vision-based computing capabilities that can understand what you’re looking at.”

Google Lens compares the picture you just took (or even the image in your viewfinder) against a huge database of images from around the web. Machine learning algorithms sort and rank indexed images based on how closely they

match your shot.

Lens attempts to “understand” what’s in the picture. If it “sees” text, links, or QR codes, it will give you the option to interact with these elements. Taking a picture of a landmark like the Eiffel Tower will provide information about it. If the image contains a product like a pair of headphones, Lens will provide helpful links to retailers where you can buy that product. The list goes on and on.

Google is constantly improving Lens with new features, just like its core product, Google Search. Below you’ll find a selection of the best Google Lens features you can use right now.

Advertisement

## Jira to Azure DevOps Sync

Improve Your Workflow When  
You Sync Jira With Azure  
DevOps. Start Your Free Trial...



Appfire

## How to get Google Lens on your Android phone or tablet

For this Google Lens guide, we'll assume you want to get the standalone Lens app, which is the best way to experience it. To do so, click on the link below to install the app.

- [Google Lens for Android on Play Store](#)

Google Lens is also part of the main Google app, which is preinstalled on all Android phones. To access it, tap on the “camera” icon in the app’s search box. You can also open it via [Google Assistant](#) with the “open Lens” voice command.

Several Android phone makers embed Lens in their camera apps. Look for the Lens icon in the interface or overlaid on the viewfinder.

Google Lens is also built into [Google Photos](#) on Android. Just open an image in Google Photos and tap on the Lens icon at the bottom of the screen.

## How to get Google Lens on your iPhone or iPad

On iOS devices, Google Lens is available via the Google app, which is [available from the App Store](#). Note that you **can’t** use Lens by going to the Google search page in your browser.

Alternatively, Google Photos ([download it from the App Store](#)) also integrates Lens on iOS.

## Read More Android Authority



LG V60 users get surprise Android 13 update in the US

---



HUAWEI's bringing its latest Google-free waterproof foldable flagship to Europe

---



ASUS Chromebook Vibe CX34 Flip review: Come for the gaming, stay for the rest

---

Powered by Playwire

Advertisement

## Jira to Azure DevOps Sync

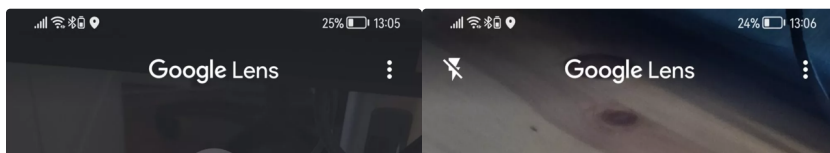
Improve Your Workflow When  
You Sync Jira With Azure  
DevOps. Start Your Free Trial...



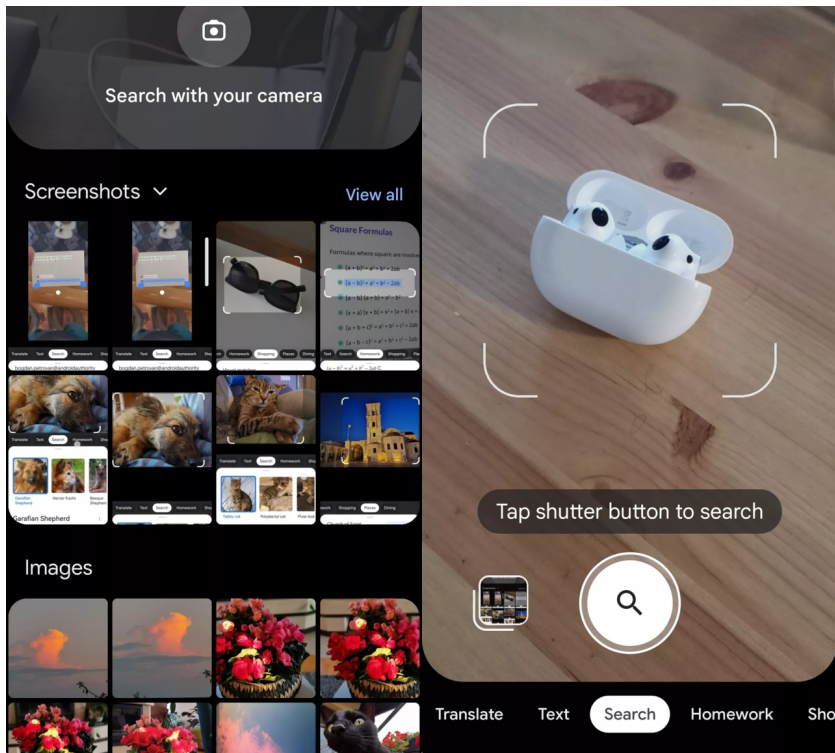
Appfire

## How to use Google Lens

Regardless of how you open it, Google Lens is easy to use. You should see a viewfinder and the camera roll with your recent pictures when you open it. Tap the viewfinder to take a new picture, or look for an older one in the camera roll.







You can also use it on screenshots and other images stored on your phone — tap on the downward arrow symbol next to **Screenshots** to see all folders.

When you analyze a picture with Google Lens, you'll see a shutter button and a slider that lets you switch between the modes the app supports:

- Translate
- Text
- Search
- Homework
- Shopping
- Places

- Dining

Depending on which mode you're using, Lens will allow you to interact with the contents of the image, by copying text, opening links, saving contact information, and more.

## **Top things you can do with Google Lens**

**How to translate text from images with Google Lens**

google lens translate text

Bogdan Petrovan / Android Authority

Have you ever found yourself staring at an important-looking sign written in a foreign language? Google Lens to the rescue.

Advertisement

# Jira to Azure DevOps Sync

Improve Your Workflow When You Sync Jira With Azure DevOps. Start Your Free Trial...

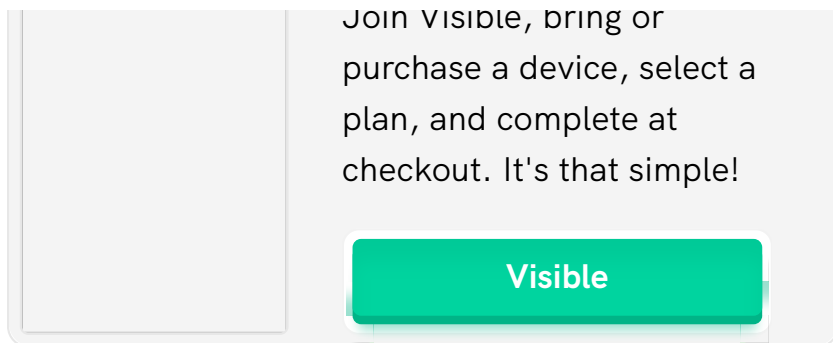




Appfire

## Visible Deal: Score unlimited data, talk, text, and more starting \$25/mo!

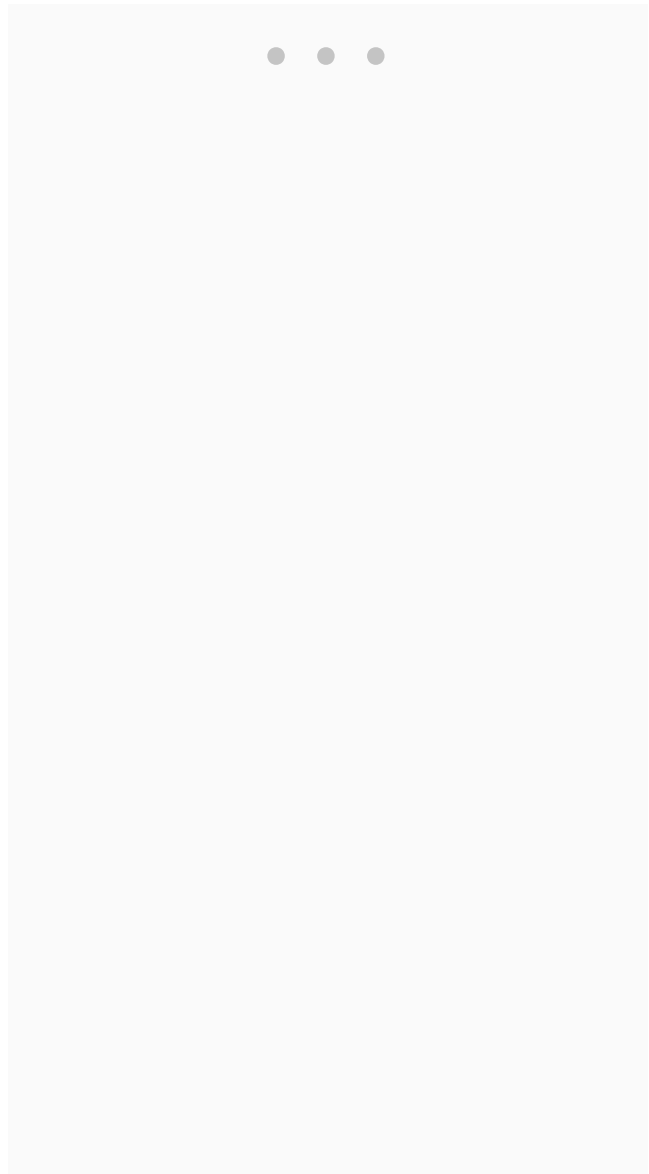
Try Visible free for 15-days



You can use Google Lens as a visual translator for many languages. Just point the app at some text you want to translate and wait a second. Lens will attempt to recognize the language, but you can manually select the language pair if it fails to do so automatically.

The app overlays translated text over the original image. It works best when you have a clear and unobstructed view of the text. Even when it's not perfect, it's usually enough to understand the gist of the text.

This incredibly useful feature has long been part of Google Translate, but having it baked into Lens makes it even more accessible.



Once you have some translated text, you can choose to copy it, send it to your computer, use it as a search term, listen to it, or transfer it to the Google Translate app.

## **How to copy-paste text from real life**

google lens copy text

Bogdan Petrovan / Android Authority

With Google Lens, you can copy printed or even handwritten text from just about anywhere and quickly turn it into editable text you can interact with on your phone or computer.


It's as simple as pointing your phone at the text you want to copy and tapping the shutter button. Lens will highlight any text it recognizes and allow you to select it. From there, you can copy it, use it as a search term, translate it, or send it to your computer.

Advertisement

# Jira to Azure DevOps Sync

Improve Your Workflow When You Sync Jira With Azure DevOps. Start Your Free Trial...



Appfire



Transferring text from your phone to your computer is an especially helpful Google Lens feature. Let's say you want to copy several paragraphs from a textbook and don't want to type it out by hand. Use Google Lens to snap a picture, then select the text you want and tap **Copy to computer**. You will see a list of devices where you are signed in in the Chrome browser. Select the computer you want, and the text will be added to its clipboard. Just hit Paste or Ctrl-V/Cmd-V in any text field to see it.

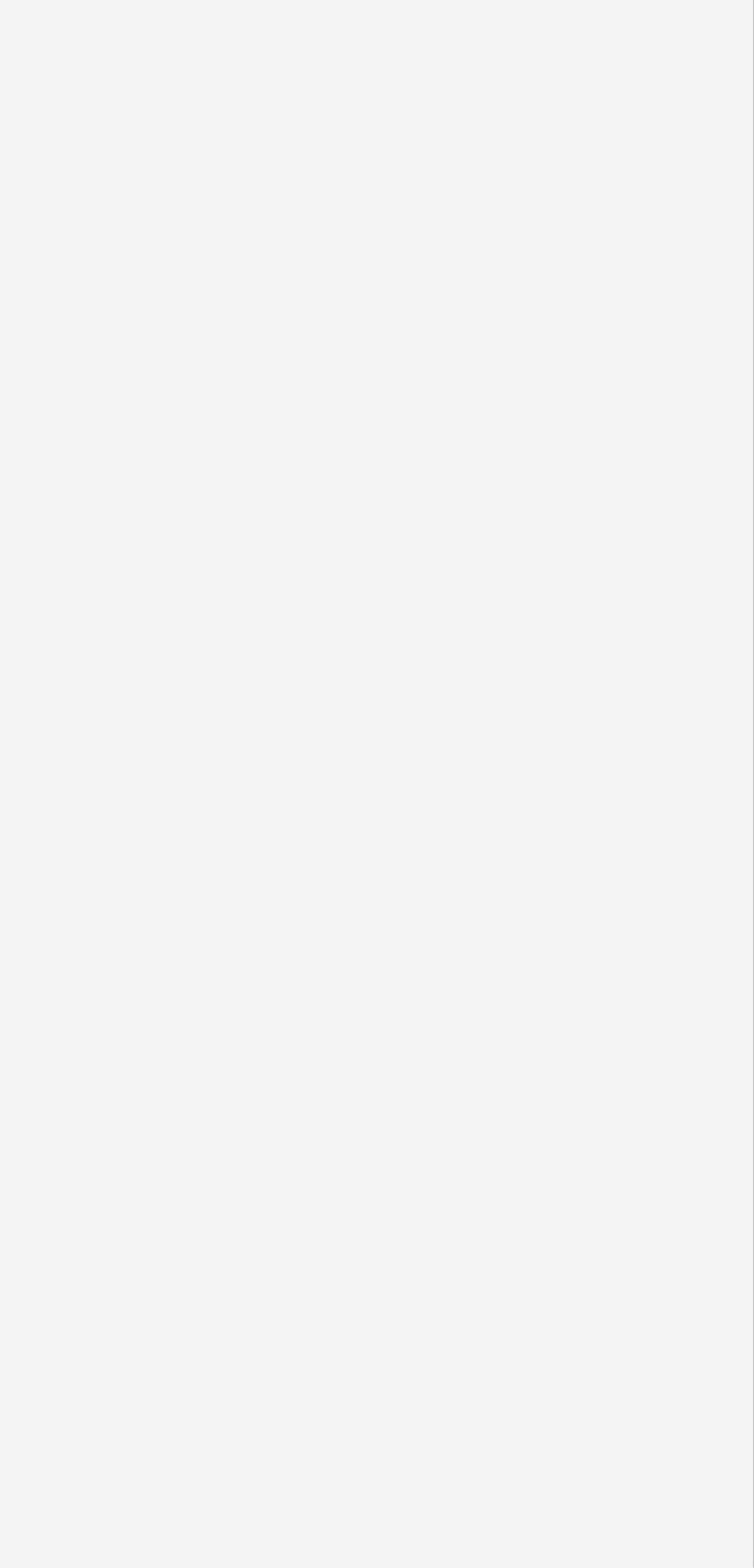
## Open URLs from images

google lens open url

Bogdan Petrovan / Android Authority

When Google Lens spots a URL in the image, it gives you the option to open the link. Just take the picture; in most cases, the URL will be highlighted automatically. In some cases, you may need to switch to Text mode and/or highlight the URL manually. From there, you should see a pill button with a globe icon that will take you to the respective URL.

## **Scan QR codes and barcodes with Google Lens**



QR codes have become ubiquitous, but some phone makers still don't include QR recognition in their camera apps. With Lens, you can just point the phone at the code you want to open and wait for the overlay with the URL of the code to pop open. Click on it and off you go.



Similarly, you can scan barcodes on products ranging from books to personal electronics. This can be especially handy when you want to identify a product or find a shopping link for it.

Also read: [How to use Google Docs — Basic tutorial, plus tips and tricks](#)

**Search for objects with Google Lens**

google lens identify objects

Bogdan Petrovan / Android Authority

If you take pictures of something that Google can identify with any degree of confidence, Lens will display search results related to that thing. It's the fallback option that you get when none of the other options (text, barcodes, shopping, etc.) apply.

If you take a picture of something very generic, like a sunset, you will be shown images that resemble your picture. In general, though, Google will always attempt to understand the **contents** of the image, as opposed to just returning the most visually similar images.



Advertisement

# Jira to Azure DevOps Sync

Improve Your Workflow When  
You Sync Jira With Azure  
DevOps. Start Your Free Trial...



Appfire

If you point Lens at a dog or cat, the app will look for pictures of animals that resemble your pet. In many cases, it will even tell you what breed it thinks the pet is.

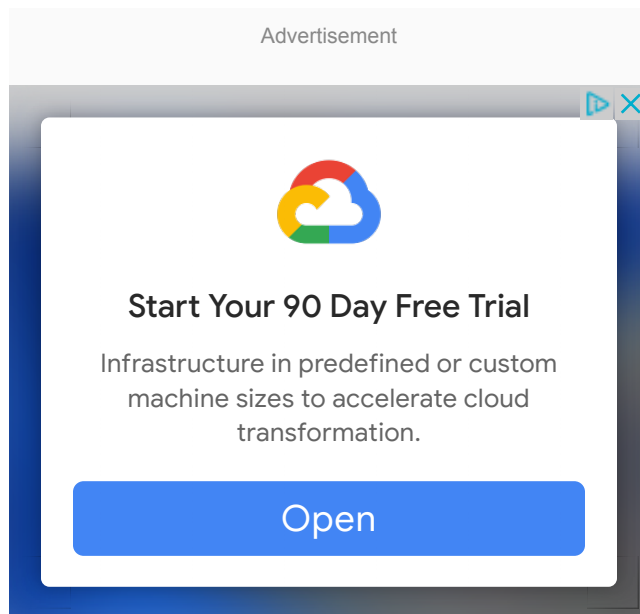
google lens find pets breed

Bogdan Petrovan / Android Authority

If you point at a consumer product, Lens will usually do a good job of recognizing the product and returning the most relevant results for it. Scanning my **Xbox controller** returned links to retailers selling the same model and some news sites talking about it. Scanning barcodes or labels on the product is another good way to get precise matches.

Here's a list of things Google Lens can recognize and offer useful info on:

- Plants
- Pets and other animals
- Food
- Books, CDs, DVDs
- Other consumer products
- Cars
- Logos



## Search for similar faces in Google Photos

In **December 2022**, Google started testing new functionality within Google Photos. When viewing photos with faces, some users found that a new search button replaced the Lens button. Users could tap the search button to detect other photos that include that person's face.

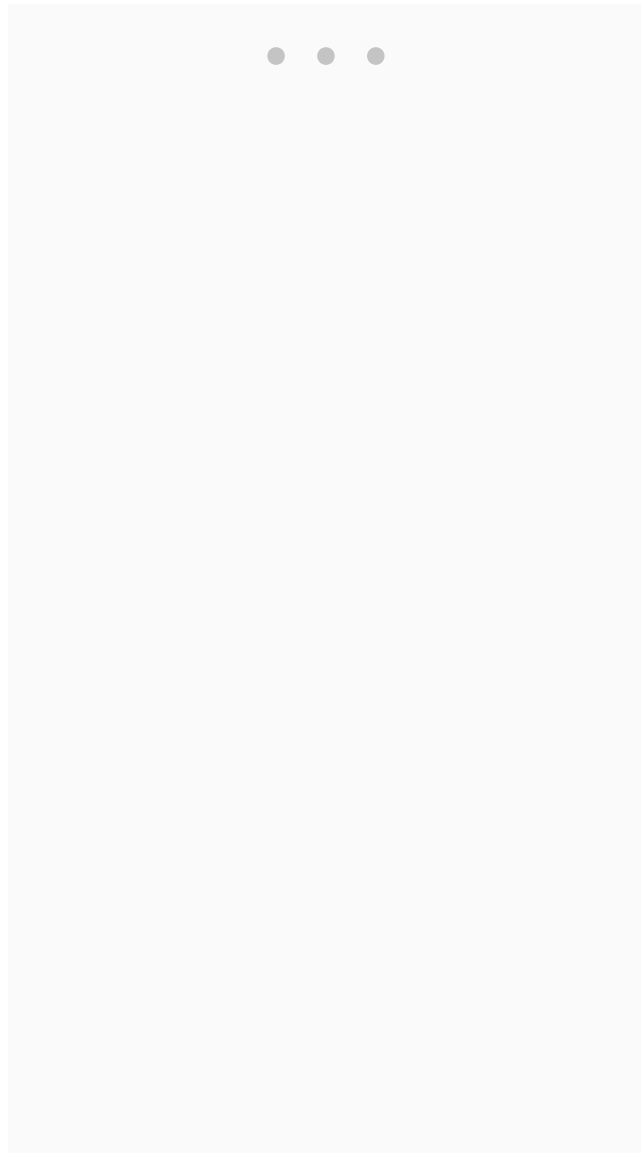
Previously tapping the Lens button would let you search for similar images online, as detailed in the previous section. However, this new functionality specifically searches for people in your own photo library. Additionally, tapping on a face of a given person will display other images of that person too.

It seems that the feature remains a limited test, and there's no clear indication that it'll become a mainstay on Photos in the future. It's worth giving it a whirl if you have it.

**Get help with your schoolwork with Google Lens**



If you're as hopeless at math as I am, you'll appreciate Google Lens' ability to provide help with solving equations. You can point the camera at simple formulas or school questions and tap Homework. Make sure you highlight the formula and double-check that the app has correctly picked it up (sometimes Lens misinterprets math symbols). Lens will then show a "Your math problem" message and provide links to specialized websites that offer help with solving problems, such as Tiger Algebra.



Homework help isn't the most reliable Google Lens feature, but it can still be a valuable tool for students. The goal is to help you understand the problem rather than just solve it for you.

## **Read text aloud**

Folks with eyesight problems or anyone who prefers to listen rather than read text will benefit from Lens' ability to read out text. Just take a picture of the text you want to listen to,



whether it's the screen of your computer or the blurb on the back of a book. Tap Text and then Listen. The app should start reciting the text.

## **Add an event to your calendar with Google Lens**

When Lens recognizes a date in the image you're scanning, it will give you the option to create a calendar event for that date. Perfect for setting reminders or creating calendar entries without manually opening the calendar app and digging for the right date.

To get this Google Lens feature, scan the date (several formats are recognized) and tap on the pill button with the date that shows up in the Text section.

## **Save info from a business card**

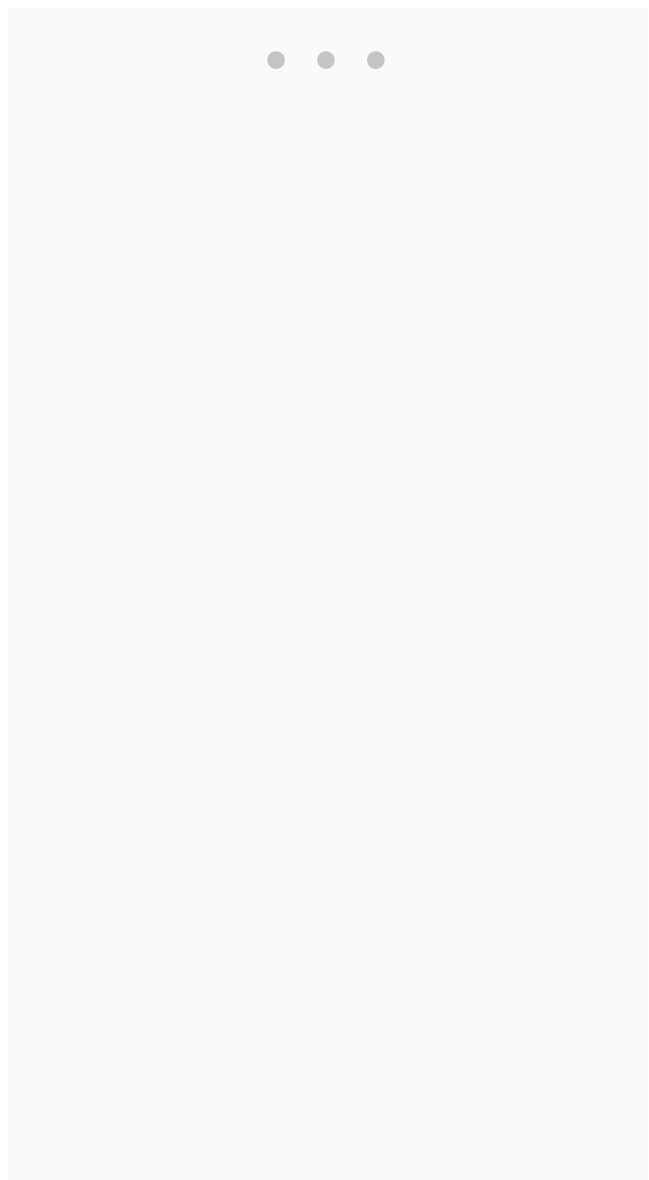
Another business-oriented Google Lens feature is the ability to quickly save information from a business card. The app will recognize contact names, email addresses, and phone numbers and offer you the option to add them to your [contacts app](#).

## **Call or email without typing with Google Lens**

google lens save contacts business card

Bogdan Petrovan / Android Authority

When Google Lenses recognizes a phone number or email address, you can tap on them to quickly jump to the calling or email apps. This eliminates any hassle with typing long numbers or addresses and can potentially save you some headaches caused by typos.



## Navigate to an address

Google Lens recognizes addresses and displays a map thumbnail you can tap on to start

navigating to that address. It also works with some zip codes/post codes.

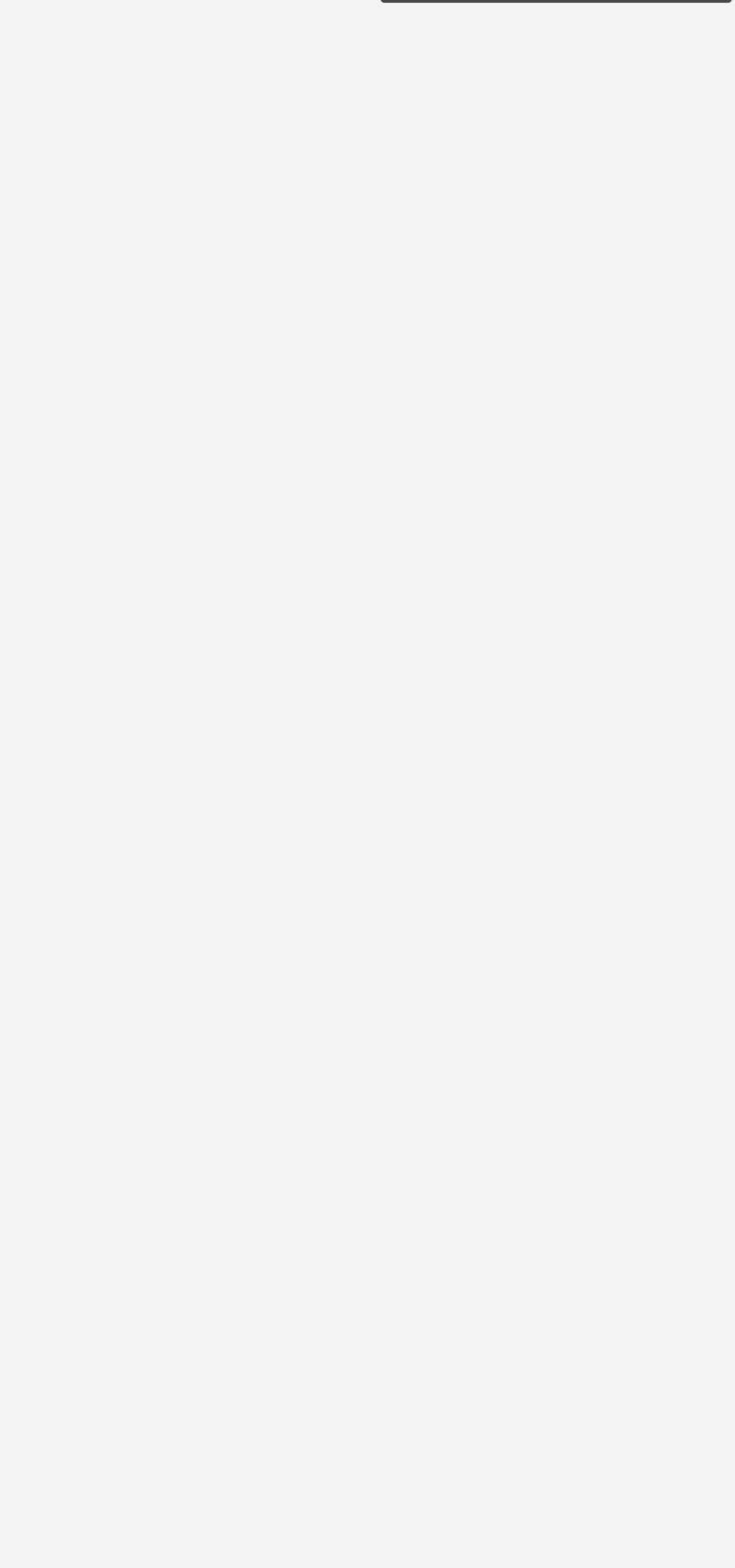
## **Buy stuff with Google Lens**

google lens shopping for products

Bogdan Petrovan / Android Authority

When Lens identifies a product, the Shopping section will display links to retailers that offer that product. The thumbnails include price tags, and there is a price filter for quickly finding the best deals. If Google is unsure which product you have, it will display the products that match it the closest. You can also try scanning labels and barcodes for more precise results.

## **Identify buildings and landmarks**

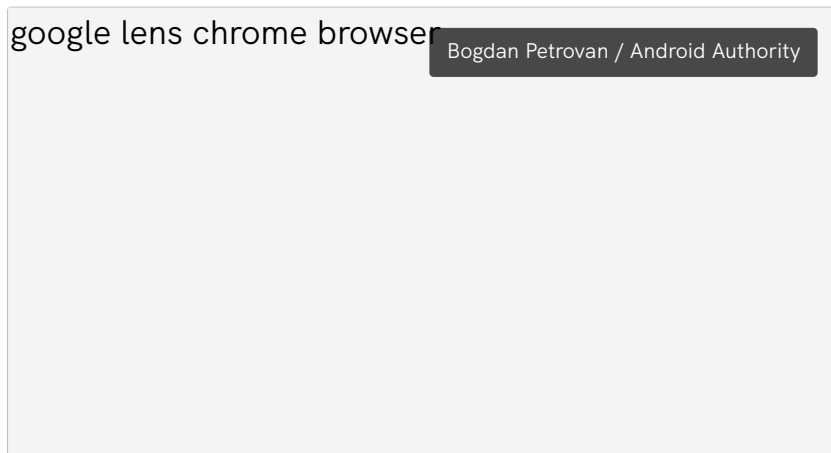


Tourists will surely appreciate the Google Lens feature that lets you point your phone at buildings and landmarks and get an overlay with information about them. While it doesn't work with your average nondescript city block or office building, it's a great tool for identifying places of interest, ranging from museums to restaurants.

## **Find recipes and nutritional information**

Pointing Google Lens at a dish, an ingredient, or even a restaurant menu will give you information on the food. Depending on what you select, you can get food recipes, places to online order a dish, or nutritional information on a portion of food or ingredient.

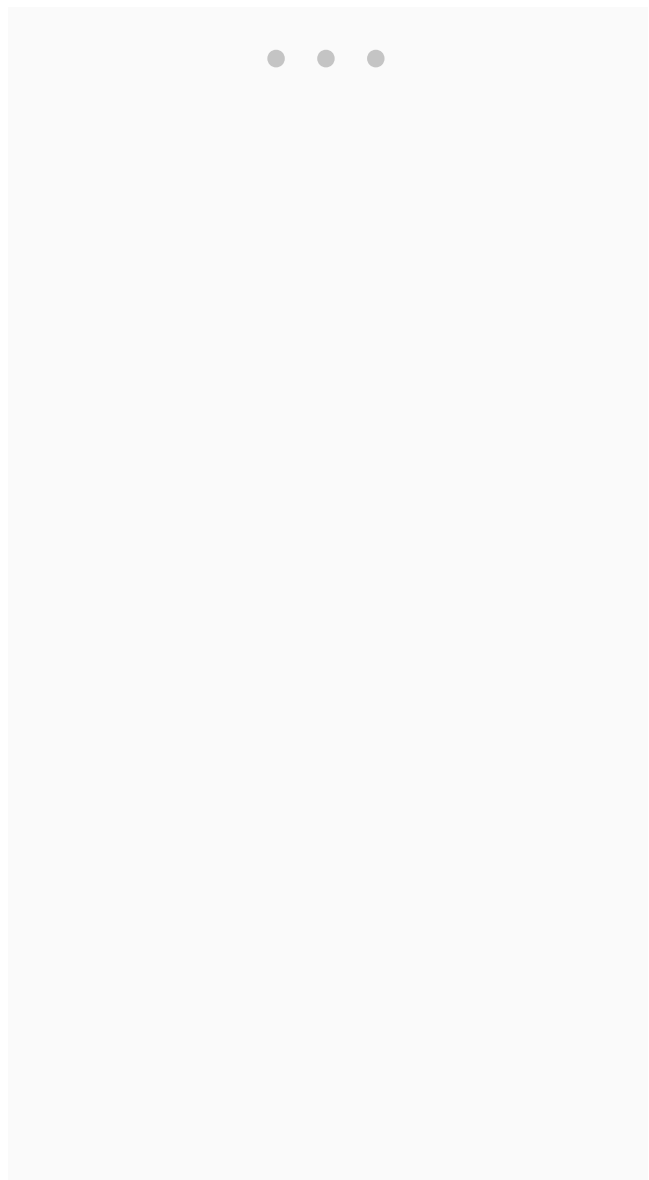
## **How to use Google Lens in the Chrome browser**



Google has integrated Lens into its Chrome



browser, where it replaces the well-known “Search for image” functionality. Lens in the Chrome browser works similarly to the mobile apps, allowing you to analyze the content of pictures, as well as copy and translate text. It lacks certain features, like the ability to open links, save contact details, or solve simple equations.



You can still tap the **Find image source** button in Lens for Chrome to bring up the old “Search for

image” interface. But if you’re one of the users who hate the integration of Lens in Google Chrome, you can go back to the [previous UI by toggling a Chrome flag](#).

## Other Google Lens tips

- Google Lens is only as good as the image it analyzes. For the best results, ensure the image is blur-free, well-lit, and centered.
- Try to get only the main subject in the shot. When you have multiple things in the shot, Lens may have trouble understanding which object you’re interested in.
- Try a few angles. Just because the first image you scan doesn’t bring up any useful results doesn’t mean Lens has failed. Other angles/shots may prove better.
- Use the image selector to crop down the part of the image you want to analyze.
- Try switching between modes, e.g., between “Text” and “Search.” The app won’t always know which mode is more relevant to you.
- Select the text by scrolling over it. Depending on the type of text, you’ll need to select it to see all the things you can do with it.
- Try Lens on older pictures. You can use the app on any picture, regardless of when it was taken or by whom. If you find an interesting

image online, you can download it on your phone and use Lens to learn more about its contents.

- Ditch those dedicated apps. If you have limited storage, consider uninstalling any standalone apps that Lens can replace. Examples include text recognition (OCR) apps, plant identifiers, animal identifiers, QR and barcode readers, business card digitizing apps, and more.

Also read: [15 best Android apps available right now](#)

## Google Lens FAQs

Is Google Lens safe to use?



How do I open Google Lens?



Is there a Google Lens app for iPhone?



Can I use Google Lens on my computer?



Can I disable Google Lens from the




**Chrome browser?**

**Why is Google Lens on my phone?** 

**Can you use Google Lens on an existing photo?** 

**Does Google Lens understand handwriting?** 

**Can you use Google Lens on people?** 

**What's the difference between Lens and reverse image search?** 

GUIDES

Google

Comments

▼